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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 HA-05 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /086 W
----------028585 151857Z /43
R 140715Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0081
INFO AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 4379

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR BG BM
SUBJECT: BANGLADESH-BURMA AGREEMENT ON REFUGEE REPATRIATION

REF: RANGOON 2515

1. A SENIOR BDG OFFICIAL DESCRIBED THE BANGLADESH-BURMA AGREEMENT ON REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES FROM THE ARAKAN TO POLCOUNSELOR JULY 13, IN ESSENTIALLY SAME TERMS AS THOSE GIVEN TO EMBASSY RANGOON BY GUB MFA AND REPORTED IN REFTEL.

2. QAZI JALALUDDIN AHMAD, CURRENTLY ELECTION AND PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY, WAS INFORMAL ADDITION TO BANGLADESH NEGOTIATING GROUP ON JULY 8 AND 9. (HE HAD BEEN PART OF FIRST BANGLADESHI DELEGATION TO RANGOON WHICH WAS HEADED BY KAZI ANWARUL HUQ AND IS FORMER DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, CHITTAGONG)
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JALAL, WHO HAD VISITED CAMPS ALONG WITH AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION, BROUGHT BACK FROM TEKNAF THE BROTHER-IN-LAW OF ARAKAN STATE COUNCIL LEADER. ACCORDING TO JALAL A BIT OF STRAIGHT TALK BETWEEN THE RELATIVES ABOUT POTENTIAL REPRISALS ON MAGHS LIVING IN BANGLADESH WAS ONE FACTOR IN BREAKING THE LOG JAM.

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3. JALAL SAID THAT SPECIAL MEETING IN THE MORNING OF JULY 9, LED TO BANGLADESHI ACCEPTANCE OF WHAT WERE ESSENTIALLY BURMESE PROPOSALS AS GIVEN IN REFTEL. HE EMPHASIZED, AS HAD TIN TUN, THAT ISSUANCE OF NRC AND FRC CERTIFICATES IN ARAKAN HAD BEEN LIMITED AND PREDICATED THAT FEW REFUGEES WOULD BE ABLE TO PRODUCE SUCH CERTIFICATES. HE THOUGHT THAT THE SECOND CATEGORY (THOSE WHO HAVE OTHER DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE) WOULD BE THE LARGEST GROUP AS IN HIS TALKS WITH THE REFUGEES HE FOUND THAT MANY HAD SOME KIND OF PAPER WITH THEM.

4. JALAL WAS CRITICAL OF THE PRESS TREATMENT OF THE AGREEMENT HERE AND ITS STIMULATING BY THE STATEMENTS OF FOREIGN MINISTER SHAMSUL HUQ WHICH HAS GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT ALL 200,000 PLUS REFUGEES ARE ABOUT TO PACK UP FOR THEIR RETURN TO THE ARAKAN. JALAL SAID HE WOULD GUESS THAT LITTLE MORE THAN HALF WOULD QUALIFY AND THAT THERE WOULD BE A LONG PERIOD OF HARD BARGAINING WITH THE BURMESE ON WHICH SHOULD RETURN.

5. JALAL'S SKEPTICISM ACCORDS WITH THAT WE HAVE EXPRESSED AND WHICH IS THE VIEW OF THE WESTERN DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY HERE. HOWEVER, THE AGREEMENT, IN WHATEVER MANNER IT MAY EVENTUALLY BE IMPLEMENTED, HAS DEFUSED THE SUBJECT AS A POLITICAL ISSUE HERE. PRESIDENT ZIA CAN PROBABLY GO INTO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION
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WITHOUT HIS HANDLING OF THE SITUATION WITH BURMA AS A CAMPAGIN ISSUE.
SCHNEIDER

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